STATE OF ILLINOIS
Office of the Governor
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

GEORGE H. RYAN
GOVERNOR

September 9, 2002

Surface Transportation Board
Attention: Vernon A. Williams
Secretary
1925 K Street NW (7th Floor)
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Dear Secretary Williams:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is seeking approval of the Surface Transportation Board to have railroad track owned by the East St. Louis Junction Stockyards Railroad Company (ESLJ) abandoned and service over the track by the Union Pacific Railroad discontinued. This action is requested to enable IDOT to acquire land underlying the track that is needed for a project to relocate Illinois Route 3 between Sauget and Venice, Illinois.

Relocation of Illinois Route 3 will provide improved, safer highway service along the Illinois side of the Mississippi River. The existing route has numerous intersections and at-grade railroad crossings that cause lengthy traffic delays. The new road will be a great improvement to the highway infrastructure and will enhance economic development in this distressed region.

The relocation of Illinois Route 3 is an essential project by itself but it is also a component of a comprehensive transportation initiative known as the New Mississippi River Bridge Project. In addition to the construction of a bridge to provide crucial new capacity over the Mississippi River at St. Louis, this project encompasses the relocation of Illinois Route 3 and Interstate 70, the reconstruction of the I-64/I-70/I-55 interchange and other related highway improvements. All of these project initiatives are essential to improving safety, reducing congestion and enhancing our infrastructure in the southwestern Illinois region.

I endorse IDOT's request asking for a prompt and favorable consideration of its filing by the Surface Transportation Board. This action is vital to achieve our goal of improving the region's transportation system.

Sincerely,

George H. Ryan
GOVERNOR